



PRESS RELEASE

House Armed Services Committee

Floyd D. Spence, Chairman

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CHAIRMAN FLOYD D. SPENCE

STATEMENT ON H.R. 4446

H.R. 4446 is the second of the three bills the Committee has received on sequential referral from the Commerce Committee. This bill proposes to set aside a critical component of last year's NNSA reforms by allowing the Secretary of Energy to use his Assistant Secretary for Environment, Safety and Health to levy Price Anderson Act civil penalties on NNSA contractors.

One of the key provisions of the NNSA legislation was to establish a semi-autonomous status that retains the authority of the Secretary but allows the new agency to operate more autonomously from the rest of the DOE bureaucracy. This bill makes a direct attack on that principle by setting aside this requirement and allowing the Assistant Secretary of Energy for ESH to get back into the business of directing the affairs of NNSA facilities and contractors.

Accordingly, I will offer a substitute amendment to this bill that conforms it with the NNSA reform legislation by ensuring that the Secretary can only assess Price Anderson fines through the NNSA Administrator as intended and required by Congress last year.

I urge the committee to support this amendment in order to protect the semi-autonomous status of the NNSA established last year.

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